

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-17

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TO AMEMBASSY LISBON

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E. O. 11652: DECONTROL DEC. 31, 1977.

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PO, CU

SUBJECT: AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS FOR PAIGC

REF: EMBTEL 2278

1. THE DEPARTMENT HAS NO INFORMATION TO CONFIRM THE
HIGHLY DOUBTFUL STORY THAT 2,000 AMERICAN VENCEREMOS
BRIGADE MEMBERS ARE NOW TRAINING IN CUBA FOR ACTION IN
PORTUGUESE GUINEA.

2. VENCEREMOS BRIGADES DO EXIST, HOWEVER. SINCE LATE
1969 GROUPS OF YOUNG AMERICANS HAVE ORGANIZED THEMSELVES
INTO SYMBOLIC BRIGADES AND TRAVELED ANNUALLY TO CUBA
WITHOUT U. S. PASSPORTS, OSTENSIBLY TO CUT SUGAR CANE
OR WORK ON OTHER PROJECTS AND LEARN ABOUT THE CUBAN
REVOLUTION AT FIRST HAND. ROUGHLY 2,000-2,500 IN ALL HAVE
GONE SINCE 1969. THIS YEAR ONLY 200 AT THE MOST HAVE
BEEN IN CUBA AT ANY ONE TIME. THEIR PRESENCE AND
ACTIVITIES-- INCLUDING EXPRESSIONS OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE
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CUBAN REVOLUTION AND OPPOSITION TO U. S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA-- HAVE PRIMARILY BEEN USED BY THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT TO SCORE PROPAGANDA POINTS WITH BOTH DOMESTIC AND OVERSEAS AUDIENCES. THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT TO SOME DEGREE HAS ALSO SOUGHT TO INDOCTRINATE THE BRIGADE MEMBERS.

3. WHILE TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE THE MAGAZINE ARTICLE IS WRONG, THE POSSIBILITY OBVIOUSLY CANNOT BE EXCLUDED THAT INDIVIDUAL U. S. CITIZENS WHO HAVE BEEN IN CUBA WITH THE VENCEREMOS BRIGADES MAY AT SOME TIME OR OTHER TURN UP IN PORTUGUESE GUINEA WITH THE PAIGC. ROGERS

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